

FOREST RECREATION NICHE

(Revised 09/28/07 - from Recreation Facility Analysis, signed 7/14,2008)

Mission Statement: The Shawnee National Forest will provide quality recreation opportunities and services to the public that are consistent with our unique place among recreation providers in southern Illinois. We will manage recreation areas and programs on national forest lands in compliance with Forest Plan direction and compatible with ecosystem sustainability. We will seek opportunities to strengthen interest and participation in recreation on the Shawnee by working in partnership with such organizations as the Ohio River Scenic Byway.

The Shawnee NF recreation niche includes those settings and facilities that are unique to the Forest and compliment rather than compete with existing facilities of other southern Illinois public and private recreation providers. Where other public lands offer highly developed camping, lodging, dining or big-lake water sport facilities, the Shawnee National Forest has large expanses of remote back country and a number of significant historic sites. In keeping with our niche, and consistent with funding and staffing levels, the Shawnee will concentrate on the following recreation program:

1. Provide outstanding opportunities for horseback riding and hiking through a well managed designated trail system and associated support facilities.
2. Maintain appropriate infrastructure at our signature recreation sites, such as Garden of the Gods, Lake Glendale, Pounds Hollow, Bell Smith Springs, Lincoln Memorial, Johnson Creek and Little Grand Canyon.
3. Provide water-based recreation opportunities for no-wake or non-motorized boating, as well as fishing and swimming at sites such as Pounds Hollow, Johnson Creek and Lake Glendale.
4. Provide meaningful interpretation of the cultural heritage of southern Illinois.

The success of our recreation program will depend upon continuously monitoring Forest visitors and their recreational preferences and by meeting public expectations for cleanliness, condition, and safety at our facilities. The future of quality recreation on the Shawnee National Forest will be secured by providing desirable opportunities while achieving fiscal accountability in our programs and facilities. Fiscal accountability will be measured in terms of recreation facilities and programs that can be maintained with the funding available.